(c) whether such a facility would be extended to the Dakshin Express plying between Delhi and Visakhapatnam?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI K. C. LENKA): (a) to (c) As a matter of policy, catering requirements of passengers are met from the static units enroute.. Pantry car services are provided only on selected long distance trains for which due to timings, stoppages etc. the catering requirements of the passengers either cannot normally be met from the static units enroute for the facilities in the static units are inadequate. Besides, Railways are not having spare pantry cars at present.

Besides, due to poor patronage and heavy loss, the Railway administration had to earlier withdraw the Pantry Car services from Dakshin Exp. and to replace it by a second class sleeper coach.

Timings of Hirakhand Express Train

2489. SHRIMATI ILA PANDA: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal under Government's consideration to regularise the timings of Hirakhand Express Train as represented by local bodies in Orissa and Andhra Pradesh; and

(b) if so, what action has been taken by Government in this regard and whether any additional facilities are proposed to be provided to the passengers?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI K. C. LENKA): (a) At present there is no proposal for rescheduling Hirakhand Express.

(b) In order to provide convenient morning service to Bhubaneswar, DMU2 Utkal Sammelini S-1923 Palasa-Cuttack Passenger has been provided with push pull rake in lieu of 216 Passenger, with faster timings. This leaves Berhampur at 5.30 hrs. and arrives Bhubaneswar at 9.25. Besides, stoppage of Konark Express has been provided at Chatrapur.

Request from Karnataka Government for conversion of Railway Lines

2490. SHRI B. K. HARIPRASAD: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Karnataka Government has made a request to Central Government for the conversion of metre-gauge into broad gauge, the entire segments of Hospet-Hassan-Mangalore and Bagalkot-Managalore in view of the proposed setting up of a one million ton steel plant by the Joint Sector;

(b) whether Government are aware that apart from providing basic infrastructural facilities for setting up steel/petrochemical units at Mangalore, the conversion would also be economically justified on view of assured passenger/freight traffic; and

(c) if so, whether necessary provisions/budgetary allocations would be made for these projects on priority basis?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI K. C. LENKA): (a) and (b) Yes. Sir.

(c) The project for gauge conversion of Arsikere-Hassan-Mangalore section has been referred to Planning Commission for their approval. The work is proposed to be taken up with the approval of Parliament, after the approval of Planning Commission has been received. As regards Sholapur-Gadag, the work is already included in the Budget. However actual construction work will be taken up on receipt of approval from Planning Commission who have been requested for the same.

Implementation of Railway Project in Maharashtra

2481. SHRI MURLIDHAR CHANDRAKANT BHANDRE: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the targets fixed for various railways projects under implementation in Maharashtra;